

# Sweet dreams are made of this: an interview with Ireland's Eurovision representative, Bambie Thug!

By: Ella Healy.

'Eurovision', the word brings about a certain sense of nostalgia of a time, when a mention of Ireland would strike fear into the hearts of our competitors at the thought of the seven-time champions.

However, in recent years, we feared those glory days were long in the distant past. With a 26-year drought hanging over the heads of the nation, despair grew stronger with every passing year. That is, until this year's annual Late Late Show Eurovision Special, when the public took a more risqué option in choosing Bambie Thug.

From the moment Bambie graced the television screen, their unique "Ouija pop" style was like nothing we had ever seen before. A wave of positive feedback from the judges on the night about how refreshing and innovative Bambie is, gave way to a premonition of the victory that was to come.

I began by asking Bambie to describe what they were like as a child. "I loved performing from a very young age, and I always wanted to be on stage. My sisters and I would regularly write and perform our own plays at home, any chance I could." It is clear Bambie's passion for the arts blossomed from an early age, but Bambie's flair for creative endeavours didn't stop there, as they played the lead role of Cinderella in a first-year play and won a music award for their musical genius. "My favourite subjects in school were English, Music, and Home Economics. I remember ditching other classes to play guitar in the prayer room quite a bit."

Bambie reminisces fondly about several past teachers in St. Mary's who have had a profound impact on their life, "Mrs. Twomey (English): I always felt seen by her, and that was super important for me as a budding writer. I have dyslexia, and she never made me feel like it was a problem." They also mention Ms. Behan, a former music teacher, "I sang one of the first full length songs I'd ever written for her, and she was always encouraging of my craft. It gave me the confidence to continue making music, especially since I was terrible at theory. She told me it didn't matter; what I had was special."

There is one teacher, though, that particularly sticks in Bambie's memory; Mr. Healy, a history teacher and Bambie's Year Head, until his untimely passing when Bambie was a sixth-year student. "I am always reminded of him when the sun is out. He would always tell us to close our eyes and "look up to the sun and smile." It is touching to hear the impact that a teacher can have on a student with a little encouragement and belief.

Navigating the trials and tribulations of adolescence is a challenge for everyone, and Bambie is no exception. Bambie mentioned being overlooked in their youth in previous interviews. Upon reflecting, Bambie tells of the wise words they would share with their teenage self. "I think I would tell younger me to try and not get so hung up on being liked by everyone. You will find your community later. It doesn't matter that you're bad at Maths or find it difficult to concentrate on subjects that don't spark a fire in you." "Don't get upset over boys. You won't even remember why you liked them later. Believe in yourself and be unashamedly yourself; it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks!" It's clear Bambie has a wise head on their shoulders. As a young person myself, in the same shoes as Bambie once was all those years ago, it is emotive to hear advice that resonates so strongly with me.

Bambie has undoubtedly won the hearts of the Irish people. They narrated what it was like to be on the receiving end of such support, "It's an unbelievable opportunity, and it feels so heartwarming to be accepted and backed so much by my country. The fact that Ireland believed in me to represent us at ESC is an incredible feeling. As a non-binary person, representing not just Ireland but also the queer community on the world stage is something my younger self could never have dreamed of."

As The Eurovision Song Contest is on the horizon, what does life currently look like for Bambie Thug ?

"It is extremely fast-paced. I have to constantly remind myself to stop for moments of rest and to take it all in and reflect. I'm working very hard."

As the end of our interview looms, I pose the question of the future to Bambie. "My future goals are to continue to create art in all its forms. I have a few music festivals lined up after Eurovision, and I want to put out a bigger body of work. I will continue to push the limits and carve out my own path."

As the interview draws to a close, I couldn't help but feel very privileged to have the opportunity to interview such a resilient and inspiring artist, who proudly carries a torch for the queer community, and is living proof to follow your dreams, who knows where they will take you? Have faith in yourself, forge your own path and the rest will follow.

Good luck to Bambie Thug in the Eurovision Song Contest, from one St. Mary's student to another. Thank you, Bambie Thug.